

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 283.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 1859.

PRICE 1½d.

PAROCHIAL NEWSPAPERS.

IN almost every district of the metropolis, as well as in many of its suburbs, there are now established one or more local newspapers, wherein the World is represented in little; where the Rectors are as Archbishops—sometimes pillars of piety, sometimes 'bloated ecclesiastics'—the Board of Guardians as Peers of the Realm, the Vestrymen as Members of Parliament; where an unruly Pauper is exalted into a dangerous Demagogue; and the Representative of the Borough is portrayed, according to the politics of the paper, either as the most abominable tyrant, or the most heaven-born monarch that ever swayed the destinies of Littleton, or (if it be a suburban district), ruled fertile Narrowmead.

The leading articles, whether levelled against the waste of public money in repairing the town-pump, or adjuring all loyal and noble natures to stand by Jenkins in the coming struggle for the beadship, are crushing in their severity, and impressive in their type—which is generally a good deal larger than that of the leaders in the *Times*. The letters of *Conservator*, directed against the late innovations practised by the gas committee, only yield in indignation and italics to the fiery sarcasms of *Libertas*, who has (always) 'yet to learn' that the tyrannous monopoly of a water-company is to be endured for ever. *Strafford* is born again in a poor-law guardian; and *Hampden* is revived, with even more than his original fervour, in a recalcitrant rate-payer.

All these journals, whether in town or country, are started 'to supply an obvious void in local literature;' the *Narrowmead Argus*, as we perceive, for one, although the *Narrowmead Mercury*, which preceded it, seems to entertain a totally different opinion upon that subject. Nothing in the annals of newspaper warfare can indeed exceed the fury with which the combat between these rival periodicals is waged. Both have agents (gratuitous) and correspondents (voluntary) over the whole length and breadth of Narrowmead parish; no subject—that is to say, no parochial subject—is too great, or, on the other hand, too small, to be grappled with by their truly catholic spirit. They have each 'exclusive information' upon every imaginable topic. All is fish that comes to their net in the vast ocean of local affairs, and they have not seldom very pretty pickings besides, in the mud they stir up at the bottom. We happen to enjoy the acquaintance of the talented conductor of the *Narrowmead Argus*—the author, it may be observed, of these magnificent letters signed 'The Younger Brutus,' addressed, strategically, to himself in his own columns—

and are therefore in a position to speak particularly concerning that organ, although we by no means rely upon our friend's account of the manner in which the *Mercury* is conducted.

'I need not say,' remarked this gentleman complacently, when, on a late occasion, we were alone together in his suburban villa, and after he had taken more than one glass of toddy, which I had mixed for him after the northern manner—'I need not tell you that to manage a literary concern of this character, a man must be possessed not only of considerable intellectual attainments, and of an almost infallible judgment, but must have a graceful and sprightly style as well.

'It is not every writer who can pen a eulogium upon chilblain liniment—for instance—which may stand on its own merits as an artistic sketch, and yet be an advertisement as well.

'I flatter myself, I understand these things. When the Messrs Whitebare, hair-cutters here, wished Us to recommend their bear's grease as the only really genuine production of that nature to be obtained south of the Arctic Circle, I believe that I gave them satisfaction. It was quite an interesting paper—that advertisement—beginning with some curious missionary experience among the Esquimaux, and going on to treat scientifically of the Pole, with some humorous remarks upon the human poll, and so, by the easiest and most natural transition possible, to the Messrs Whitebare, High Street.

'I don't like to know too much of these things—especially before bestowing on them this sort of approbation—and I had just as soon not have had that present of thirteen shilling-pots of the mixture from the grateful hairdresser, as an additional reward for my exertions. If I had tried a specimen before I wrote the essay, my pen would have refused its office, or, at all events, performed its functions much less successfully. That's the worst of having such an exceedingly delicate conscience. Now, the editor of the *Mercury* would no more hesitate about praising an article he knew to be filthy as well as deleterious—if he got the money in advance, that is—than he would refuse a new subscriber to his miserable paper, and that he is not likely to get in a hurry, I think. One lives and learns, of course, with regard to all these matters: for example, I shall never forget when I first entered upon my responsible duties, a certain visit which was paid to me by old Druggem, the chemist, with reference to the *Narrowmead Mixture*. He praised it to that extent, when I sat broiling in my little den one summer day, as an effervescent and refreshing drink in hot weather, that I said I was

sure I should do the advertisement better if he were to send me half-a-dozen, and I were to drink them, first.

"Why, no," said he, "I don't think you had better do that, for particular reasons;" and these, with a hideous leer upon his pharmacopoeical countenance, he presently confided to me. The ginger-beer vintage had failed with him, it seemed, that June, and he had about sixty dozen of spoilt "Pop" under his shop-counter: with this he had mingled some mulberry-juice, to impart to it a new tone and colour; he himself had bestowed upon it a name—the Narrowmead Mixture—and he had come to me to concoct for it a reputation. That panegyric was, however, in consequence of this indiscreet avowal, about the flattest thing I ever wrote, although there was an appropriate Persian air enough about the imagery, when I compared the thing to sherbet, and brought in some impressive allusions to the Prophet Mohammed. The concluding idea, indeed, of the United Kingdom Temperance Alliance presenting a medal to Druggem for having superseded, by the invention of this delightful compound, the use of spirituous liquors, was, I am bound to acknowledge, much better conceived than executed.

'Advertisements such as these require taste, and skill, and fancy; nay—if I may say so—perhaps no small amount of Genius; and they are, besides, our most important consideration. But you may well suppose that the *Narrowmead Argus* has other departments likewise. The Muse has a column to herself in every number, and a poet—which, by the greatest luck in the world, my eldest boy happens to be—is literally kept upon the premises. It is quite astounding to observe the remarkable fecundity of that lad in supplying us with works of the imagination. Upon the day we go to press, I have only to holloa down the speaking-tube: "Jack, a sonnet, my boy, as quick as you can," or, "Jack, our meteorological observer has not sent in his copy; we must have a couple of pages from you at least," when up comes the fourteen lines, or the little epic, as the case may be, just as though the lad were a word-organ, and ground his verse to order.

'That meteorological observer of ours, although unpunctual, is exceedingly useful to us, and is certainly a most indefatigable son of science. I have my doubts whether he does not live exclusively out of doors. The way in which he goes about, stooping, and crawling, and climbing, in order to capture the temperature, wherever it may be, is amazingly praiseworthy, and all the more so as he does not get anything for it—except, as I should suppose, unlimited rheumatism. Just look at this report of his, of a month or two back, and then tell me if the man who acts barometer to the *Times* puts himself to half the trouble which our observer takes: "Number of nights at two feet from the ground, at or below 32° F., twenty-one; number of nights at or below 32° F., on the grass, twenty-five; mean amount of terrestrial radiation, 4.3; greatest heat in sunshine, 88°"—where our meteorological observer must have got a *coup de soleil*—"mean degree of humidity, saturation being the unit, .93"—where our observer must have caught bronchitis at the least. The scientific information which was supplied by this invaluable ally to the *Argus* concerning the eclipse of last year, was of a character which required him to correct his own proofs, I can assure you. I hope it was all right at last; but I confess to the editor's being completely in the dark about it; while our compositor and a half—for we keep a man and a boy—were well-nigh frenzied.

'Among the natural phenomena of the eclipse, he observed, he said, these facts—that the pigeons

retired to rest during the temporary darkness; that the cats made those unpleasant disturbances which are commonly confined to the hours of the night; and that the winter-flowers which are accustomed to shut up their blossoms at eve, were taken in by the unusual aspect of the sun. This last remark, however, was not properly in his department, but rather belonged to that of our botanical correspondent, who is also one of the most painstaking of his species. He is much more popular with our readers, particularly with our lady-readers, than his *collaborateur*, since he knows all the banks whereon the wild thyme grows—and, indeed, where everything else grows, from the vernal water-starwort to the hairy bitter cress. Not only does he supply to the various flowers these astonishing names, but he gives to each its local habitation. The colt's-foot is to be found, he says, in numbers on Narrowmead pasture; the common moschatel, in the lane behind Smith's wine-vaults; lords and ladies in profusion upon the race-ground; the cuckoo pint, in the field beyond the Toper's Arms; the ground ivy, in the back-yard of the green-tea establishment of Mixorts & Company; and the lady's smock (a sort of air-plant), very numerous in Scrubben's drying-ground.

'We have an entomologist, also, as an occasional contributor; but the general effect of him, I think, is more to make our readers' flesh creep than anything else.

'Archæology and antiquities form no slight share of the good things we have to offer to our subscribers. Narrowmead in the time of the Druids; Narrowmead under the Heptarchy; Narrowmead during the civil wars—every description, in short, of back-view which Narrowmead has to offer, has been faithfully daguerreotyped from the imagination or erudition of our historical correspondent. Narrowmead Church, it is almost needless to mention, has long been in our columns the home of the literary jackdaw, the hunting-ground of all antiquarian sportsmen; while Narrowmead Tower, which is now put up to auction annually, to be bidden for by enterprising toll-gate keepers, has been proved, in our pages, incontestably, to have been the palace, the prison, the birthplace, or the scene of dissolution of a long array of celebrated characters, from the Earl of Warwick (surnamed the King-maker) to Dr Johnson; and from Mary Queen of Scots to the scarcely less notorious Mrs Manning.

'These comprise the principal literary staff to whom the *Argus* looks for permanent contributions; but we have countless correspondents besides. Of these, Publicola Junior and the Younger Brutus—ahem!—are perhaps the most remarkable. The former gentleman, referring, only the otherday, under the head of "Coming Elections," to the parochial suffrages for a new churchwarden and another constable, used language so indignantly heroic, that he was very nearly getting me horsewhipped, and at this present moment he lies under an indictment for a libel upon the local Board of Health. If I had not given the offender's name up with great presence of mind, at the first hint of danger, the *Argus* itself would be figuring, in the person of its editor, at the bar of offended justice. Both these gentlemen, however, infuse a certain raciness into the paper which it could ill afford to lose; and in the very rare instances where there is nothing of a public nature to be made a target for their noble scorn, they are good enough to attack one another with the greatest acrimony in adjacent columns.

'For sermons delivered for the benefit of philanthropic societies, for lectures administered gratis at our mechanics' institute, the *Narrowmead Argus* has always the most fervid praise. This is, however, partly attributable to the fact, that the preachers and

lecturers are accustomed to send to our columns their own remarks upon their own performances, which are rarely found to be deficient in genial appreciation. The rest of our newspaper is neatly but unambitiously filled up with notices of the times of departure and return of the Narrowmead railway omnibus.

'And the *Mercury*?' inquired we with a smile.

'The *Mercury*,' responded our talented friend, rising from his chair with difficulty, steadying himself with his left hand against the corner of the table, and extending his right in a Ciceronic manner towards the crockery cupboard—'the *Narrowmead Mercury* is, as its classical name implies, were its ignorant conductors but aware of it, a Thievish Eavesdropper, deriving its scanty information from key-holes and the like illegitimate channels, and sapping the foundations of all that we hold great and venerable'—And, in fact, our friend anticipated the best part of a withering leader of his own, which thunderbolt was already set up in gigantic type, and burst forth from the office of the *Argus* upon the ensuing morning.

THE DEATH-BRINGER.

TOWARDS the end of Maria Theresa's reign, when the empress-queen had finished her wars, got most of her family married, and established strict etiquette at court, there appeared among the rank and fashion of Vienna a lady, whose comings and goings were more anxiously watched, and more earnestly talked of, than ever were those of envoy or ambassador. She was neither young nor beautiful, clever nor rich, but a *stift-dame* or pensioner of one of those institutions so abundant in Germany, which were founded by the munificence of early magnates for the education and maintenance of the undowered branches of their family-trees. Madame von Enslar, as the lady was called, though yet in single blessedness—for the madame came with the *stift*—was on the shady side of fifty, of unquestionably noble birth, had been maid of honour to the empress when she was arch-duchess, and could still boast of a place in her majesty's memory; yet no *fräulein*, introduced for the first time to the family of her intended, could have been more amiable. What was still better, everybody believed that Madame von Enslar's amiability was a genuine article. Had her head been detachable, any acquaintance might have borrowed it. Whoever was in difficulties, might count on her help or counsel, and madame was not a bad adviser; but her chosen field of labour, and, it seemed, of delight, too, was the sick-room. Beside the night-lamp or in the darkened chamber, madame was at home in anybody's house. Her quiet ways, her unwearied care, and her unquestionable abilities in the manufacture of soups, jellies, and all other comforts for the indisposed, made her a perfect treasure to all who intended to keep their beds for some time; but, strange to say, there were people in Vienna who would rather have seen the most slatternly hospital-nurse at their bedsides. The morals of the Austrian capital have never stood high, and superstitious terrors are the natural accompaniments of such society. How it originated, nobody could tell; but a whisper gradually crept into boudoir, drawing-room, and down the back-stairs, that wherever madame went to nurse and tend the sick, death was sure to follow her. Examples of the fact might be

heard in every circle. Had not the young Countess Valsenburg been a second Hebe for youth and health, till madame went to nurse her in the cold she caught at her Imperial Majesty's Christmas reception? yet the cold turned to a rapid consumption, and the countess joined her ancestors in the family-vault before Easter. Did not the canoness of Stofenheim look rather too rosy for a lady so nearly connected with prayer and fasting, till she sprained her ankle in the Ash-Wednesday procession, and madame came with that inestimable poultice invented by the doctor of her *stift*. Nobody ever saw the canoness looking rosy after that. One turn of sickness followed another, and her funeral went out with the last leaves of the summer. Did not the old Baroness von Hardenbach belong to one of the toughest families in all Austria, till madame began to make embrocations for the rheumatism she had every winter, and her heirs were agreeably surprised by having to provide mourning six weeks after? Similar instances were on record among the poor whom the amiable *stift-dame* visited. The servants for whom she prescribed, and the tradesmen in whose families she took an interest—doctors, lawyers, and priests—all believed in this bad-luck; but nobody undertook to explain her connection with the King of Terrors. That she had a criminal hand in the business, could not be even imagined. Besides having no motive for anybody's removal, no legacy to expect, no rival to get rid of, Madame von Enslar was a frank, honest, good-natured soul, the very opposite of all who ever dealt in poisons.

Nevertheless, she visited the sick, and the sick died; the whisper was loud in the city, but low in the court. Though Prince Kannitz, that mighty minister who never permitted the decease of anybody to be mentioned in his hearing, had also forbidden the utterance of her name; though Joseph II. had consulted Mesmer on the subject, it was said without effect, the empress-queen would not acknowledge the existence of such tales. Madame had been her maid of honour, and her confessor was the lady's distant relation. To believe anything more than her imperial majesty would have been a decided infraction of etiquette. The Viennese world of fashion was therefore obliged to content itself with retailing those startling facts under the seal of secrecy, and keeping its own maladies from coming to madame's ears; but in proportion as the *stift-dame* was a terror to its brave and fair, when themselves were concerned, so did she become their hope and confidence in the case of old and wealthy relations, troublesome dependents, creditors, obstructors, some said spouses—in short, anybody whom it was desirable to get out of the way.

It is proverbial that those most concerned in a report are generally the last to hear it. Madame von Enslar went on attending masses, making clothes for the poor, and compounding good things for the indisposed, without the slightest idea of the hopes and fears which hung upon her visits. From her youth, which the world now around her regarded as a long past and primitive time, she had lived in the *Stifthouse*—an establishment where young ladies were educated, and older ones dwelt in a somewhat conventual fashion, with daily prayers, solemn observance of fast and festival, and great execution done in

needlework and cookery. Whether it were the practice of stift-houses in general, of madame's in particular, or the lady's own disposition that obtained such credit, certain it was that she had come to the capital after residing the appointed twenty years under the stift-mother's superintendence, with the neat black dress and gold crucifix of the institution, and no tendency whatever to intrigue, scandal, or curiosity touching her neighbours' affairs. The good woman was congratulating herself on the excellent health with which her friends were blessed, in the third winter of her sojourn at Vienna. None of all her acquaintances would acknowledge that they or theirs were ill, or likely to be so; the poor whom she visited were equally free from complaints; her own and her friends' servants declared themselves in a most satisfactory condition; when a transaction occurred which convinced even the empress-queen, and enlightened madame on the mysterious part of her own history.

The archbishop of Salzburg was one of the richest churchmen in the empire. He had estates both in Austria and the Tyrol, large deposits in the imperial bank, revenues from shrines, bridges, and highways; his vineyards produced the best wine; his park contained the finest game, and his country-house was delightfully situated on a rising-ground overlooking the Danube, and within two German miles of Vienna. There Ludwig Firstenfeld lived in princely splendour and high favour with Maria Theresa. Almost forty years before, when a rival *kaiser* had been crowned at Linz—when her right was assailed by all the princes who had promised to maintain it—when the Holy See stood prudently aloof, to see which side should win, he had gallantly championed her cause in and out of canonicals, canvassed the states of Hungary, gave sage counsel in the imperial closet, and advanced money for carrying on the war. The wisdom which the archbishop had displayed in those days of uncertainty, made his advice so necessary to the empress-queen, that he rarely visited his palace in Salzburg, or his castle in Swabia, but resided chiefly at his country-house, within reach of the court, the theatres, and the news. His grace received the best company in Vienna; her majesty and all the imperial family honoured his state-balls with their presence; he had the choicest pictures, the rarest china, the most select conservatories, and his mansion was kept in all sorts of propriety by the administration of Madame Segandorf, his widowed niece, and her three grown-up daughters. Madame Segandorf's husband had been a count of the Austrian Netherlands. His estates were lost partly in the war with France, and partly at French hazard. Mother and daughters had consequently no provision becoming their rank, but they were all amiable, accomplished, and devotedly attached to their wealthy uncle.

The spiritual lord of Salzburg was verging on seventy-five, but still a stately figure at the levée, and a dreaded antagonist at the chess-board. As became an archbishop so high in imperial favour, he was believed to be endowed with every virtue. The court-poets spoke of his canonisation as an event to be expected; the inferior clergy agreed that his residence in the bowers of Paradise was ready. Nevertheless, Ludwig Firstenfeld was in no hurry to leave his choice toky, his first-rate venison, and his elegant country-house, of which he gave a convincing proof by keeping its doors steadily closed against Madame von Enslar. The archbishop did not believe the idle tales that were afloat, any more than his imperial patroness; after her majesty's example, he did not even notice them, and greeted the stift-dame, when he met her in society, with almost paternal kindness. Yet, while

his hospitalities were extended to rich and poor, home-born and foreign, who had the smallest pretensions to noble blood, madame was never invited within his walls or grounds.

The lady would have been probably content to see herself thus overlooked for life, but it did not tally with another lady's plans. In a moment of amiable weakness, some years before, the archbishop had permitted his niece to learn that his will was made in favour of herself and her daughters. There were none of them growing younger. The grafts and counts to whom the junior ladies aspired, somehow found out that no dowry could be expected till their uncle's death, and were not in haste to propose. Madame Segandorf, being still a fine woman, had considerable calculations on an old prince with heavily encumbered estates and a habit of incessant gambling, and while her solicitude regarding the health and welfare of her dear uncle daily increased, she left no stone unturned to get the stift-dame invited to his country-house. Even the efforts of widows are not always crowned with success. The praises of madame's piety, humility, and unbounded reverence for his grace, were sounded without effect. Then madame herself was stirred up to make advances. It was a pity the archbishop should neglect her so; somebody must have prejudiced his mind against her; there were always ill-natured people in the world; perhaps they had led him to believe that she was careless of his good opinion and great interest at court. It might be well to get in his way at times, talk of his most celebrated pictures, and hint a strong desire to see them. These stratagems, and many more, were tried, but all in vain. His grace would take no hints, and hear no insinuations. Poor madame, constantly reminded of the fact, began to think it the black cloud of her life that she was shut out from his country-house; complained of it to all her acquaintances, grieved over it in secret, and was thinking of offerings to the most benevolent saints on the subject, when by chance she hit on a more direct expedient.

Passing through the Jews' quarter in one of her missions of charity, she saw hanging in the shop of a noted dealer in second-hand garments a magnificent morning-gown of crimson damask, flowered with gold. Being a woman, the stift-dame was taken captive by its grandeur. Moreover, it looked perfectly new. The archbishop had a special liking for splendid attire; and if, as Solomon told her, a gift made room for a man, such a present would certainly secure a lady place at his board and in his ball-room. The Jew's price was low compared with the actual value of the robe; it had come into his hands by some chance of trade, and did not suit his customers. Yet decidedly cheap as it was, the cost would leave madame nothing to offer that Christmas at the shrine of Our Lady, who happened to be the patron-saint of her stift. However, the archbishop's good graces were in prospect. Madame went straight home for all her savings, paid for the magnificent morning-gown, saw it safely packed up, and felt herself an already invited guest, when it was deposited, box and all, in a private cupboard, to be seen by nobody till it was despatched to the country-house, as a Christmas gift for his Grace of Salzburg.

Christmas was the archbishop's birthday, which returned for the seventy-fifth time that year, and he determined to celebrate it with more than usual festivity. The uttermost branches of his family were invited months before, and gladly obeyed the summons of their rich and reverend relative. They came from the hills of Bohemia, and the plains of Lombardy; from the frontiers of France, and the borders of Russia; for the house of Firstenfeld was numerously represented; and wherever the Hapsburg

sceptre ruled, there were its boughs to be found flourishing in the law, in the church, or in the army. Gifts came in as well as friends—when did a rich man's birthday lack presents?—but among them there was nothing so splendid, nothing so much to the archbishop's taste, as the magnificent morning-gown, sent just as it came from the Jew's shop, by the hand of a trusty messenger, with a note which it had cost the stiff-dame two sleepless nights to compose. His grace was delighted, and all his assembled relations envied the lucky sender, except Madame Segendorf, who returned to her praises with fresh vigour, hinted that she feared the poor lady had but a lonely Christmas; everybody had not a dear, kind uncle like her and her girls. The archbishop took no notice of these grateful remarks, but as the present had arrived on the eve of the festival, he did madame the honour of wearing it at his birthday levee.

Everybody admired the morning-gown. The sports of the day, the morning mass, and the evening banquet, all went off well. The bishop's health was drunk in old Austrian fashion—good wishes, predictions, and prayers for length of days and increase of dignity, even to the cardinal's hat, were made on his behalf; but before the rejoicings were fairly over, it was observed that his Grace did not look quite well. Next morning, he was decidedly indisposed; his anxious relations, not knowing the state of his will, remained in the house to see what turn the illness would take; but first, Madame Segendorf sickened also; then her daughters, one after another; then the cousins, cousins-in-law, noble ladies, and high officials who had assembled round the bishop's festive board, began to complain, and retire to their chambers. Half the physicians of repute in Vienna were in full action at the country-house. At first, they thought something might have gone wrong at the banquet, and a strict search after poison was commenced; but in a short time it became evident that the disease was small-pox. The dread and devastation which attended that malady over all Europe in the eighteenth century, are matters of history. It was the desolator of palace and cottage, and the plague of preceding ages had no such terrors for men. In the bishop's country-house, its visitation came with a malignity never equalled. All who sickened, died; all who fled were seized on their homeward ways. The prelate himself survived the widow and her daughters, who had been in such haste for his testament, only a few days; and before the new year was a month old, the numerous house of Firstenfeld was so diminished, that its large possessions fell to three poor priests and an old doctor of laws, who, by common consent, built a monastery for the brothers of Lazarus on the site of the elegant country-house.

The court and the public woke up as they seldom wake in Austria. A strict investigation regarding the stiff-dame's present was set on foot, and by the perseverance of the police it was discovered to have formed part of the wardrobe of Louis XV., and been worn for the first time in the attack of small-pox which finished his reign. As usual in those times, everything worn by his departed majesty on that occasion was supposed to have been burned; but the magnificent morning-gown tempted a covetous valet: he saved it from the fire; sold it to a travelling Jew, under a stipulation never to shew it on French ground: thus it had found its way to Vienna, and been purchased by the unlucky Madame von Enslar. The sifting of the transaction not only confirmed the public belief in her connection with the last enemy, but induced the empress-queen to command her immediate retirement to her stift-house, which she never again quitted; and it is said to have given currency to a popular superstition, which still

prevails in Upper Austria, where every out-of-the-way village has some tale regarding the unconscious powers of some old man or woman known as the Death-bringer.

MORAL SKETCHES FROM THE BIRD-WORLD.*

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

Nor with the magnifying-glass of science, but with the naked eye of tender sympathy and psychological interest, have I ever watched our domestic singing-birds, and as opportunity offered, I have peopled a chamber with some twenty birds, partly for the sake of observing the innate, essential characteristics of every one of these unsophisticated children of nature, and partly also to discover the influence of civilisation upon them through their living together, and their intercourse with human kind.

If my bird-state has originated very much like the free state of North America, in an involuntary going in and out, without any written constitution, without a monarchical form of government, it has yet formed, through a harmonious understanding, a law of society perhaps just as natural as that of J. J. Rousseau. If sometimes the power of the stronger prevails—if now and then Lynch-law is practised—if almost daily the old contest between mine and thine is renewed, one may yet often feel one's self carried back into the golden past, or hurried on into the millennium, as, though with me the lion does not lie down with the lamb, the starling eats in peace out of the same dish as the turtle-dove, which is almost as note-worthy. If vices and crimes do sometimes appear, they may be found among men also, notwithstanding their civilisation, and are sometimes the fruits of it. Such a discord but rarely interrupts the harmonious concert of sweet voices, if the sun shines cheerfully into the chamber and upon the fir-tree that stands within it, and makes their prison a kind of fairy grotto, with branchy lattice-windows, and a roof of green, sun-illuminated foliage. Let me not be supposed to mean the horrible condemnation of the most innocent hero in the world, whose only fault is his beauty and his voice, to a cage in which he can scarcely move, or at most can only hop from one side of his perch to the other; a condemnation to powder and lead is mercy compared with this lifelong imprisonment in iron. What I mean is bird-houses or chambers, where they can fly about at pleasure.

To give a description of my bird-family, I must attempt it in the form of biographical sketches.

In the first place stands the starling, whom only recently a young raven has sought to rival in human-like behaviour and varied accomplishments. Perhaps I ought to say, rather, that he is most of all influenced by civilisation, addicted to its enjoyments, and infected by its corruptions. The starling, of all the birds of the wood, attaches himself most to men, and among the assembly of his brethren, is the ever-true merry-maker, the buffoon and court-fool of my establishment. As serviceable as he is in the open field in destroying worms and caterpillars, he is just as useful indoors, in clearing men's heads of whims and idle caprices. It is impossible to be ill-humoured or morose when the rogue has taken it into his head to be merry, and he is in his Sunday humour every day. I have often envied him the ease with which he forgets every annoyance, and the Mark Tapley of the feathered race, resumes his good temper and his cheerful song.

He is a gay brother-student, who, with all his display, does not neglect the sciences; of an inquiring turn of mind, and whose erudition is

* From the German.

principally manifested in popular songs. He picks up his best songs in the streets; in these there is nothing artificial, all is nature: the mewing of the cat, the barking of the dog, the clucking of the hen, and the rumbling of a cart-wheel, he imitates with incomparable exactness. Sometimes he undertakes the office of a wind-mill; at others, he helps his neighbour the joiner to file his saws. Out of doors, he is a builder and house-painter; in short, a universal genius. In philosophy, he is an eclectic; he selects all that is good from all sources; there is consequently no book and no sound too insignificant for him, from which he will not extract something. He is also fond of a nice tit-bit; he prefers white bread to black, roast veal to beef; and though an avowed disciple of Priesnitz, in respect of baths, yet, on festive occasions, he dips his head in beer or wine, dances his polka, and rolls his eyes about like a lover. He is very inquisitive, he must thrust his beak in everywhere; but how carefully he touches a strange object. Like a crafty rascal as he is, he first satisfies himself that it is no trap for him; then he falls upon it, and brings it entire to the ground; then he examines it within and without, above and below, in which operation his beak does him excellent service, like an excise-man's gauge.

And he can be angry, too—fearfully angry; with his hair on end, and his eyes flashing, he can avenge himself for every disrespectful treatment he receives from children or grown-up persons, with the most piercing threats; for he is not a little conceited with his singing abilities. When he is standing outside the gate of his cage, on a small platform, turning his beak to all sides, and begins to pipe, he reminds me of the showman at a fair, who stands outside his booth, blowing his trumpet on all sides, before the representation of a piece, with a 'Now, then, gentlemen, all is ready; walk up. He that is not satisfied, shall have his money returned. Children, half-price.'

When, after his first summer, I took him in his cage out of the bird-chamber into the parlour, it was to him like coming home for the holidays for the first time; and how great was my surprise to hear from him a full orchestra the next morning. The black-bird, thrush, the lark, the titmouse, the chaffinch, he reproduced in an incomparable quodlibet; not in a mere insipid imitation, but in the most delicate and minute variations. However nonchalant, mischievous, and prying he may be, he is always at the same time the best-natured and most agreeable companion; he holds himself, it is true, with a certain sovereign hauteur towards his associates, and assumes a kind of superiority, but he has never, even in the slightest degree, ill-treated the feeblest or the smallest. 'Live and let live,' seems to be his motto. He cedes nothing to his equals; but to the attacks of his inferiors, he is very patient and indulgent: the robin, for instance, frequently snatches a meal-worm away from him, but he seems more astonished at the temerity of the youngster, than angry at his loss.

Some time since, I had a starling and a little white turtle-dove, who lived together as man and wife. Every marriage, even the most happy, has at times its family jars; but it is a fact, whether believed or not, that the wife, the gentle, quiet, turtle-dove, was far more quarrelsome and petulant than her spouse, who exercised great magnanimity towards her, and bore her infirmities with exemplary patience. Oft when he has come to sit confidentially at her side, she has greeted him with an unexpected flap with her wing, which has sent him to the ground; and the cases are very rare in which he has replied to such salutations with a poke in the ribs. However, he was not under petticoat government; by no means. One can scarcely conceive anything more comic, than when he, in a particularly good-humour,

though not very gallant, using the patient sitting dove as his footstool, stood with one foot upon her back, and trumpeted to all the quarters of heaven the praises of his much-enduring better-half; and when she was shaking her head hither and thither, as if to decline the undeserved praise, he whispered her to be quiet till he should please to dismount from his improvised platform. That he had a heart, the following incident will testify.

One day the dove had flown somewhat excitedly out of her cage, and sat down in a corner of the room. She might have sat there a quarter of an hour, with swollen feathers, when the starling got uneasy, and flew down to her. At first, he sought to rouse her from her melancholy by some gentle pushes, and as this did not succeed, then, like a second Job, not, indeed, with his head in the dust, but bent down under his wing, he stood alongside her a great while, and from time to time, addressed her in the softest and kindest plaints of sympathy. He probably would not have survived her death; she has, however, been his widow now a whole year, and has not once grieved over her loss.

The starling I now have is a bachelor; and although with a tongue unsurpassed in address, and in the glittering uniform of his variegated robe, he might have made many respectable matches, he has yet declined doing so: whether it is that he was unwilling to marry out of his family, or that he was terrified at the cares and crosses of matrimony, as he saw them in a pair of thrushes, I know not, but he seems fully resolved to spend his days gaily, and close them in single blessedness.

These thrushes I reared from the nest; and they are a sort of example of how birds of the wood live in the chamber, with their natural life not crushed out of them by their captivity; their married state, if it cannot be held up as a model of what it ought to be, is yet a pretty accurate image of what often is the case in the civilised world. He had whistled to her the tenderest strains, had sung of spring and love, till her foolish heart, caught by the sweet charms of his protestations, believed him, and thought that the golden hours of the first love would remain eternally young. But 'all males are egotists.' Even when they first began to furnish, and she was labouring industriously the whole day upon her dowry, he used to sit idly by, watching her, smoking his straw cigar, or paying his court to others, in trying the bewitching power of his song, and had to be forcibly warned off, and kept to his duty by the black-bird, who seems to play the part of a policeman among the birds. After the young pair had furnished their house, and were established in it—a self-made nest on a branch of the fir-tree—the honeymoon passed off tolerably well; he remained pretty much at home, and peace continued, except now and then a small scene occurred in respect to the cooking, which was not altogether to his mind. Once also, friend starling sneaked into the house, and as the faithful wife gave no heed to his insinuations, he maliciously overthrew her nest for her. After repeated complaints, he was punished, his wings were cut, the police kept an eye upon him, and he was confined to the floor of the room. Domestic jars, however, soon broke out again; the husband was not satisfied with the household arrangements; on these they often differed, and with open bills, and necks outstretched, they used to hurl words of defiance at each other; and very often from words they came to blows, in which the wife, as the weaker combatant, was often worsted, and lost many feathers. But generally the peace-officer, the black-bird, came to the rescue, and without uttering a word, as quick as an arrow, rushed between the combatants, and put the heartless wife-better to flight.

Greater unity was hoped for when there was a

prospect of the marriage being blessed with children. Four sky-blue eggs, with black spots, and of remarkable beauty, the wife had laid, and she almost grudged the time she spent in getting her food, so eagerly did she sit upon them. But a luckless fate seemed to hover over the house. Scarcely had the faithful mother had a few days of parental bliss, and provided her brood with the best of nourishment, when she was plunged into deep sorrow. Every one of the young birds vanished, one after the other, no one knew how; and the sorrowing look with which the poor mother, standing one day upon the wreck of her blessedness, the empty nest, appealed to me as if to ask assistance in avenging her on the miserable child-murderer, is not to be described. But who had done it? After I had looked a long while in vain all round the chamber for some hole or crevice through which a depredator might have broken through to attack the defenceless, I was obliged to look for the Herod within the precincts of the room. It could only be one of the larger birds, for whom the mother was no match in a fight for her young ones. It could not be the timid quail; just as little could it be the black-bird, the guardian of peace and order: there remained only the starling, and suspicion fell all the more strongly upon him, as he had already made one disturbing inroad upon the peaceful household. He must, therefore, in the growth of his wings, have escaped from his confinement. Somewhat summarily was he, then, in spite of his protestations of innocence, condemned to prison. Well secured by lock and key, he was obliged to look on, while new parent-joys sprang up for the thrushes, which he could not again disturb.

After three weeks, five young necks were stretched out towards the nourishing mother; but the tender cares of a mother's love were once more cut short in the morning of life. On the second day there were only three, and at mid-day only one young one in the nest. Now, I hid myself, and kept watch through a hole in the door, determined not to withdraw till I had found some clue to this strange disappearance of the little ones. And, lo! I had not long to wait, before I saw—what? It was the very father of these birds, who, with unnatural thirst for blood, raged against his own offspring. The father drove the mother, after a hard conflict, from the nest, and before I could come to the rescue, he had strangled and torn the only remaining young one to pieces. It was fortunate that capital punishment had not been introduced into the bird-state, otherwise a judicial murder had been perpetrated upon the poor starling, while now some compensation could be made to the falsely imprisoned one; for before the real culprit could be apprehended, he was at once set free, and, like the Prodigal Son, had a feast prepared for him, consisting of a dozen meal-worms. The child-murderer was, of course, confined in his place in the cell, which only opened when the placable wife, after a few days' mourning for her slain children, again ravished and befooled by his specious promises of repentance and amendment, applied for his release, and sought herself to open the doors of his prison. How he kept his promises, the future will shew.

Among the other birds, also, love played a great part. Two bull-finches sustained the tragedy of the *Bride of Messina* in an imitation but too faithful. One of the duellists was left dead upon the ground; the other, blinded by the wounds he had received, sickened to death; and this after they had been the best of friends, and each had always hastened to help the other in any fray he might be embroiled in with the robin.

The robin, a neat, little, lively creature, was the sauciest rogue in the whole company, and without respect for any, even the greatest, but had managed

to lift himself into a position of undeserved importance. Upon the leaf of the table, where he used to take his food from my hand, durst no other bird shew himself, not even the starling or the black-bird; quick as an arrow, he was at the intruder with his pointed beak; upright as a dart, he drew himself up before him, with a 'Will you go away or not?' Only the wren could rival him in the ease and gracefulness of his flight. He always insisted on his right of primogeniture over his younger brother; though the latter, gentle towards all others, maintained a continual opposition to him. At first, he was always a loser in the fight; but by degrees he became stronger, his powers increased by exercise, and he acquired some amount of toleration from the elder. Like a couple of fighting-cocks, I have often seen them staring at one another with malicious menace; suddenly, with a twitter that sounded like a summons to attack, they fell upon one another, rolled round each other like two butterflies in irritating sport, until one fell to the ground, whereupon the other, with a movement of his neck downwards, and tossing his head aloft as quick as lightning, with his tail spread out in the form of a fan, stood still in his triumph, a real man, as though he would say: 'Come on now, if you have not had enough.' The elder robin is beginning to get old; his head is bald, he hops upon one foot, and he has his favourite spots where he rests or sings. The leaf of the table is his reception-room; whenever I go into the room, he awaits me there, and looks at me with his large cunning eyes, as much as to say: 'You know my favourite dish.' If I hold a meal-worm dangling in the air, without letting a flap of his wing be heard, and without touching my hand, he snaps it off; and with incomprehensible quickness of sight and movement, he anticipates every other bird, when such a worm is thrown to him, snatches the dainty bit from before his mouth, yea, even out of his beak, carries his booty about in triumph for a while, with inimitable grace, as though to shew how sweet stolen fruits are, and then eats it up.

PERILS OF THE BUSH.

THERE are few more interesting scenes, to the lover of the wild and picturesque, than an 'outspan' in the African wilderness. The outspan is the colonial term for the bivouac. It is here that the party of travellers, or hunters, assemble of an evening, partake of their rough fare, and pass the quiet hours of the night.

An outspan is a motley group, for it is usual to find in one company English sportsmen, Dutch farmers, Caffre and Hottentot servants, and half-breeds between these. Of all sizes, colours, and languages are the men of the party. The horses and oxen are either fastened to the wagons, or are allowed to graze near their owners. Dogs of all varieties, whose genealogy would puzzle a canine herald, watch anxiously the culinary proceedings, whilst the white tilted wagons, and two or three tents, make up the exterior of the group.

Even in the far desert of Africa, the difference between man and man is not lost sight of. There is the small shrivelled-up Hottentot serving with all due humility the fat, prosperous, but illiterate Dutch boer. Yonder is the Caffre or Fingoe receiving his directions from a Hottentot. It would be difficult to say how a scale of rank has been thus established, but each individual appears to yield a ready obedience to his almost self-imposed bonds.

We will visit an African outspan, at which a party of hunters are assembled, and hear some of the tales which these men, whose lives have been passed amidst the wildest scenes, may relate. The evening has closed upon the party, who, having feasted upon

their well-earned venison, have assembled in one of their tents, from which the solacing pipe is sending forth its fragrance upon the desert. Only the élite of the party are here assembled; for it would be little short of sacrilege were a 'Totty' or Caffre to presume to enter these sacred precincts, or to join in the conversation of the master. Books are not much read by these Dutch boers, but each individual carries in his head anecdotes sufficient to form an interesting volume of personal adventures. Instead, therefore, of passing their evening in scanning the pages of a book, the hunters or travellers relate those incidents of their lives which may be unknown to the majority of their hearers. A Dutch boer past the middle age shall first tell his tale, to which we will now act the part of relater, as we have more than once acted that of listener.

When I first went into the country near the Bay of Natal, things were very different to what they are now; there were not nearly so many Caffres in the country, and there were no white men except our own party of 'Mensch.'

Game was in plenty; bucks and elands were on the hills where Pietermaritzburg now stands; elephants browsed at Eusdorris; hippopotami swarmed along the banks of the Umganie, and in the Sea-Cow Lake; and many a monster which has now sought more secure retreats, was then to be seen in the neighbourhood of the bay.

I built myself a beehive-shaped hut, like one of the Caffres, on the open ground near the Umbilo, and cultivated a little piece of ground near it; but having a span of five oxen and a wagon, I did not care to remain quiet in one spot. To trek, and to shoot and trek again, was what I always liked. Those men who like being shut up in your houses or towns, scarcely know what it is to live. Give me a fine open plain, a good horse under me, fifty miles of turf all round, and then I feel free.

Well, I had lived about three weeks near the Umbilo, when my Hottentot Plâché came one day to me in a great fright, and told me that he had seen 'the biggest snake that ever was;' that it had crossed the Umbilo river, and had entered some long reeds about half a mile from my hut. He said that the snake's head was on the land on one side, whilst the tail was on the other side of the Umbilo. Now, this river is not very broad; but if what the man told me were true, the snake must have been over thirty feet in length. I knew that a species of boa-constrictor was to be found about here, for I had shot one sixteen feet long as I was coming from the old colony to the bay.

I did not trouble myself to look after the snake, for there was a large swamp with long reeds extending for more than a mile along the banks of this river, with cover enough to conceal five hundred snakes.

About a month after Plâché's interview with the boa, there fell a vast quantity of rain, and the river rose and flooded the whole of this swamp. The nearest piece of dry land to the river was the little rising-ground which I had turned over and sowed with meales, and on which my hut stood.

One evening, during the time that the flood was out, I came back from shooting just as the sun was setting. I had shot a riet buck which I had found out in the open ground, behind the Berea Bush. Plâché was with me, and I left him and a Caffre to bring in the buck, whilst I returned home, alone, to prepare a fire, and get ready the cooking-pots.

I noticed that the water was very high, and had not left more than a hundred yards clear round my hut, which was, however, still some ten or twelve feet above the level of the flood. I placed my gun

outside, against the hut, and crawled into the doorway of the kraal. You must know that the only light that enters these buildings is by the doorway, so when I blocked up this, the only aperture, the interior was rather dark. I knew that my flint and steel-box were stuck up in the thatch of the roof, and these I could use to obtain a light, in case the embers were not smouldering in the centre of the hut, where I usually maintained a fire.

I could not see a sign of a spark amongst the ashes, when I first entered the hut; and as the evening was closing in, I thought I might have difficulty in making a fire, as the dew was so heavy that all the wood became damp, even inside the hut; so I lay down, and blew amongst the white-wood ashes, to try and rouse a flame.

Whilst I was thus occupied, I fancied that I heard something move amongst the blankets that lay by the side of the hut. I looked at the spot, and there, to my astonishment, saw a gigantic snake, which appeared nearly as large round as my body. The animal was coiled up amongst my bedding, but had about three feet, head and neck, stretched out and pointed at me—its forked tongue now and again shooting out some inch or two from its mouth.

The instant that I saw the monster, I jumped on to my feet, and looked round for a weapon, but there was not one at hand. My gun I had placed outside; my large knife I had left with Plâché, to enable him to cut up the buck, and, in fact, I was unarmed. A cold shudder came over me when I realised the state of affairs; the door of the hut was only two feet high, and to escape, therefore, I must crawl out, and I felt certain that if I stooped down, the snake would instantly dart at me.

I was not at all aware what power these snakes might possess; I had heard that they could kill nearly full-grown calves, and could crush and swallow a buck; and therefore, I believed a monster like this would make short work of me. I might fight and struggle, but, unarmed, what could I do?

How long I stood looking at the snake, I do not know, but it could not have been many seconds, although the time appeared minutes; suddenly I remembered that my Caffre had, a few days before, asked me to allow him to place an assagai in my hut, because the night-dew caused the blade to rust when the weapon was exposed. Here, then, was a hope for me, for I knew that the man had not taken away the assagai with him.

I scarcely dared take my eyes off the snake, lest the brute should dart at me; but giving a glance round the upper part of the hut, I saw the handle of the assagai protruding from the thatch, and nearly within reach of me. Something seemed to tell me that the instant I moved, the snake would spring at me. I, however, raised my hand and arm very slowly towards the assagai, and at length, by bending over a little, managed to grasp the handle. As I did so, the snake, which had gradually uncoiled during my movements, darted towards me. I jumped aside, and pulled out the broad-bladed assagai, which had been sharpened to the keenness of a razor; but the snake moved like lightning, and although he had missed me in his first dart, he recovered himself instantly, and sprang at me again. Before I could make a cut at him, his teeth caught in my leather trousers, and he thus obtained a strong hold, and with a pull as sudden as his lunge, he dragged my feet from under me, and brought me to the ground; a big fold of his body rolled over his head, and fell upon my legs, which it weighed to the ground as if a loaded wagon were on them.

He managed all this in a very short time; but I was not idle, for I knew that if he could once manage to press down my chest, or my arms, he might kill me.

Now, the feeling that first came upon me was certainly not a pleasant one, because I was without a weapon; but as soon as I grasped the assagai I knew that I was safe; consequently, when he really attacked me, I felt as though it were a piece of impudence on his part, for I never expected the affair would have been as dangerous to me as it proved to be. These things take some time to tell, but they do not take long to happen, and a struggle for life or death is frequently decided in half a minute. So it was with me. The instant the snake's body came over on my legs, I twisted round, and sliced it with the assagai. I gave two terrible gashes, and the monster, releasing its hold of my leathers, sprang at my face. I raised my arm instinctively to protect myself, which saved me from being bitten; but I was knocked down flat, and the brute was again on me; but this time I caught him by the neck with my left hand, and in an instant had nearly severed his head with the assagai. I scrambled away from the monster, which was writhing about in its agony, and escaped from the hut. Then I began to examine how I had fared in the fight. To my surprise, I found that a few deep scratches near the ankle, and a bite near the wrist, neither of which was of very great importance, were all the wounds which I had sustained. For some days afterwards, however, I suffered a great deal of pain in the legs, where the snake had pressed me.

I do not think that I should have escaped to tell this tale, if I had not found the assagai, as the boer, although unwilling to attack you when he is in the open country, is pugnacious enough when shut up with you in a circular hut about eight feet in diameter.

We soon hauled the snake from the hut, when my Hottentot arrived, and found it to measure twenty-eight feet in length, and nearly a foot in diameter in the thickest part. The Hottentot thought it must be that which he had seen, as its markings appeared the same. It was evident that the floods had driven the snake from its usual concealment in the reeds, and the animal finding a warm hut, in which were blankets and the remains of a fire, had taken up its position without ceremony, and had been probably much irritated at my sudden intrusion upon him. I never wish to have such another battle, for although I should not be afraid of the result, still the thoughts which come upon us afterwards are not pleasant. Man has an instinctive horror of serpents, and when I dreamed, for many a night afterwards, it was usually about a snake, or some other horrid reptile, which had hold of me.

'Ah!' says another of the party, 'these sort of fights are not pleasant; but your case would have been worse, if your visitor had been a four-foot cobra or puff-adder, instead of an eight-and-twenty foot boa-constrictor. It is not the biggest creatures that are always the most dangerous. It's the vice of some of them that does the mischief. As it is with animals, so it is with men—the biggest are not always the most dangerous. Jan there, who takes his *brandywyn* so quietly, is more dangerous than Karl beside him, although Jan is small, and Karl very big.'

At this sally, 'Jan,' a small, compact, dark-eyed Dutchman, with a long black beard, and sharp twinkling eyes, attracts the attention of the party. Jan is a celebrated hunter, before whom Caffres and Bushmen, elephants, lions, and other *feræ* have bowed and yielded their lives. Many a wondrous tale can Jan tell, and yet avoid drawing upon his imagination. Thirty years of a desert-life have not been passed without a variety of incidents and of hairbreadth escapes which appear marvellous to the denizens of civilised countries, but which are by no means unusual amidst the wilds of South Africa,

where the savage nature of man is too frequently left without control and where the strong arm and the ready spear often raise a man from the lowest to the highest grades amongst his fellows.

The Dutch boers have been the pioneers of civilisation in that country, and have often had to combat against the ferocious biped and quadruped, before they could even rest upon the land which they had purchased. It must be owned that these men were not unfitted for their work; hardy and bold, they stood not for trifles; were the disputants lions or savages, it mattered not much—the first were slain as wild beasts, which must be got rid of; the second would be shot in 'self-defence, or as a warning to others; or all for the glory of God. In the earlier days, the savages paid no great respect to treaties, and liked the music which an assagai made when insinuated between a white man's ribs.

Jan shall now tell one of his adventures.

'When we are young, we have many treats before us, for there are plenty of amusements of all sorts to which to look forward. When we get older, we tire of these, and want change. Too much of the same thing does not do. Now, I always think that the first time that we do anything is that which is always the most strongly impressed upon our memory, whether it be getting on a horse, driving a team of oxen, firing off a gun, killing a buck, fighting an elephant, or any other performance.

'Now, as many of you who know me are aware, I have done some one or two acts that men may be proud of. In my house there are the tails of two hundred bull elephants, all shot by my own gun, discharged from my own shoulder; ten lion-skins, each with but one bullet-hole in it; and if I had taken all the skins and all the tails that I had assisted to deprive the owners of, I might have possessed ten times ten. But never mind that, I will tell you now of the first time that I was ever in battle.'

'You have not yet told us half that you have done,' remarks one of the party; 'tell us what all these little crosses on your gun-stock mean.'

'These,' says the first speaker, 'are for Caffres—some Amakosse, some Zooloo, some Matabili.'

'What are the larger crosses?' asks the inquirer.

'There are three of them; these, and I am not ashamed to own it, are for Englishmen.'

'What!' asks one of the English visitors, 'are those marks to indicate the men you have killed? Why, there are three or four dozen small crosses, and three large.'

'Ja, there are fifty-two small crosses and three large, that is, with this roer. I've another with a few more on it, but they are only Bushmen and frontier Caffres—skulkers, they are. But all here are warriors, fighting-men, killed with their faces towards me, and many of them shot when so near to me, that it was either my life or theirs. Oh, we have led a hard life in the plains, and have had to maintain our grounds by the strength of our arms, and the accuracy of our aim. What your father left you, wasn't yours, without you were able to pull your trigger against those who tried to snatch your property from you; but quieter times are now coming, I hope.

'But now, to give you an account of my first battle, which I was led to fight as follows:

'I was living with my father over on the west side of the mountains, when we received the intelligence of the massacre of Retief and his party by the Zooloos, and also of the slaughter of the wives and children who were found unprotected around the Bay of Natal.

'Messengers were sent to all the Mensch about us to ask that we would assemble and revenge the murder of our friends and connections. Nearly every man amongst us, whether old or young, responded to the

call, and we assembled to the number of about three hundred and eighty, under Piet Uys.

'Dividing our force into two parties, we advanced against the enemy, and opened fire upon them. When we had penetrated some distance up the defile on each side of which the Zooloos, some eight thousand strong, had stationed themselves, we heard a noise, which came from behind us, and we then saw that a body of nearly a thousand picked men, who had been lying in ambush, had now cut off our retreat, and were closing in upon us. There was something awful in the sight of these savages, stained as they were with the blood of hundreds of our connections or friends. The training which the men had received now told to advantage, for they came on at a steady run, shoulder to shoulder, and three deep, brandishing their assegais, beating their large black and white ox-hide shields, and singing their war-songs. One of our divisions, under Potgeiter, was at once thrown into confusion, for the horses became frightened and unmanageable, in consequence of the noise and the appearance of the Zooloos. The other division under Uys thus had to sustain the shock of the charge, whilst at the same time the enemy who had been on the hills closed in on both sides. A heavy fire was kept up by all of us, and the Zooloos fell fast all around us. As we mowed down one line of them, more charged up in their place; and if by chance any of our party became separated from the main body, these stragglers were at once surrounded, some of the Zooloos actually clinging to the legs of the horses, and holding on even in their death-struggles, whilst others dragged the rider to the ground, and stabbed him with their broad-bladed spears. It was a fearful sight, and on me, who had never before seen a man shot dead, the effect was still more powerful than on those who had witnessed such scenes many times, for amongst our band were boers who had fought several times with Moselekatse's warriors; but none, they afterwards told me, ever equalled these Zooloos in determination and fierceness. We shot them down by hundreds, but more came up immediately in their places. Our chief, Uys, was surrounded and killed, and several others of our party; and now our only endeavour was to force our way through the enemy's ranks, and effect our escape: we therefore advanced quickly upon the rear division, fired a volley, and then charged at the opening which our bullets had made for us. It was not without the loss of several lives that we escaped from our dangerous position, for the warriors did not give way, and our road was made over the bodies of the slain or wounded. Many of the latter caught hold of the horses' legs as the animals passed near them, and thus prevented the riders from escaping. When the country became more open, our party was able to manœuvre better, and then, although the horses were nearly knocked up, the Zooloos were allowed to come within a convenient distance, when the boers fired a volley, and galloped away to load. This proceeding soon stopped the pursuit of the black warriors, who returned to their stronghold, after having received two or three volleys, and having suffered severely thereby.

'This was the general outline of the battle; but now I will tell you my part in the performance. When we charged through the ranks of the Zooloos, I happened to be on the outside of the line, what the Rodiebashes call "a flanker," consequently, I was more exposed than those who were nearer the middle of our line. We dashed along at full gallop, and pretended that we were going to fire every moment, but our guns were not reloaded; this, however, the Caffres did not know. As we passed amongst the thickest of the enemy, half-a-dozen men rushed at me, but only two were able to reach me. One of them threw his

spear, and wounded me in the thigh; the other slashed my horse, and nearly hamstringed him. Before we had journeyed half a mile, I found that I should soon have to stop, for my horse bled freely, and could scarcely canter. It was an awful thought to think that I might fall into the hands of these blood-thirsty savages; but there appeared to be no other result likely to happen, for in a few minutes my horse sunk under me, and I then saw that he had received two or three stabs in the belly, probably from the spears of those wounded men over whom we had ridden. I called to some of the Mensch who were near, and asked them to stay with me, but a panic appeared to have seized upon them, and they either did not hear, or did not heed. Knowing the danger of remaining in the open part, I ran along beside some bushes, until I found a thick forest of thorns; into this I dashed, and having found a quiet, dark corner, I stopped to consider what I should do. The prospect before me was not cheering, for I was fully sixty miles from the bay, and I had no doubt that my party would not halt until they reached this spot, and also that the country between would be overrun by the Zooloos. First, I thought of lying concealed until night, and then attempting part of the journey; but the improbability of finding my way through the bush, and the certainty of being discovered and captured by the Caffres if I followed the beaten foot-paths by which we had entered the country, soon caused me to relinquish this idea.

'I was in a very excited state when I thought over my difficulties, and could not resist the wish to peep out on the open country; so I crept to the edge of the bush, and looked all round. At first, all appeared quiet, and no person could be seen; but shortly after, I saw, at about a quarter of a mile from me, three Zooloos, one of whom was leading a horse. They were walking slowly, and appeared to be describing one to the other their respective performances. A thought at once entered my head, and set me planning. In the country between me and the Caffres were several clumps of bush, and I at once determined to risk an attack upon these men, and to endeavour to capture the horse.

'The plan was a dangerous one, but my case was desperate. Even if I did gain a victory, and possess myself of the horse, there was still no very great chance of escape, for I must pass alone over many miles of country in which strong parties of the victorious Zooloos were sure to be on the lookout for stragglers; still there is such a feeling of strength comes over us when we are mounted on a good horse, and I saw at once that this was the *schimmel* of one of our men who had been killed early in the day.

'There is something in my constitution—I do not like to call it courage—that makes me, when I am in positions of great danger, become very calm and calculating. Some other men I have found affected in a similar manner, whilst others become nervous or imprudent.

'When the thought struck me to attack these men, I made all my plans in an instant. I saw that they were approaching some rather tall trees, which appeared near a river, and between me and this river the cover was tolerably good. I waited until the party were hidden from view, and then ran towards them.

'I looked about me, and fully expected to see a party of Zooloos chasing me, but no man was near. I could hear the shrieks of women in the distance, probably over the bodies of the slain on the battle-field, but fortunately for me, every one appeared too busy elsewhere to be examining this part of the field. Twice I dropped on to the ground, as the Caffres crossed a little open patch of grass, and once I

crouched behind some bushes, and feared that all was lost, for the horse recognised my dress, pricked up his ears, and turned his head to look at me. I was scarcely two hundred yards distant then; and had the Caffres known the nature of a horse, or had they not been so much occupied in talking, my surprise, which I knew would be half the battle, would have failed. Again they passed between thick bushes, and again I ran on. I passed them at about a hundred yards' distance, but well concealed, and pushed on in advance, and lay down near the stream, at about thirty paces from the path.

'I was very hot, and my hands were shaking with excitement, for the struggle would now take place in a few seconds. I cocked my roer—fortunately, it had two barrels—and waited. On they came; I could hear their voices, then their footsteps, and at length they stood within forty paces of me. I allowed them to advance a few paces, then took aim at the man who led the horse, fired, and saw him instantly fall to the ground. I then covered the second Caffre, and dropped him.

'Now, if the third man had known that I possessed no weapon other than an empty gun, which I did not like to stay to load, he would probably have closed with me, and stabbed me with his assegai. I knew that if I shewed a sign of fear, he might suspect that my gun had power to throw two shots only, but I knew that these Caffres possessed such a slight knowledge of firearms, that they were not certain how many times we could fire without loading; so, instantly after firing, I jumped from my concealment, and pointed my gun at the remaining Caffre. He did not stop for inquiry, but jumped about from side to side like a Duiker, and rushed down the path up which he had just come.

'Having got rid of these men, I knew that only a small part of my work was done, for I was not certain that the horse would allow me to catch him; and if he were to gallop off, or shew himself shy, I should be in a more awkward position than before, because now the Zooloos knew that there was a dismounted white man near them, whom they could easily surround and kill. I knew that the only plan to adopt to catch the horse was to approach him very slowly, so as not to cause any alarm, and this was the most trying work for my patience that I ever had to do. Each minute was now of importance. The report of my gun must have alarmed the men at the village; the Caffre who had escaped would inform them of my solitary position, even a delay of a few seconds might cause me to be unmercifully tortured, and then slaughtered, and yet I knew that hurry might spoil all.

'When the Caffre who was leading the horse fell to the ground, the animal trotted off to about fifty yards' distance, and commenced grazing. When I approached him, he lifted his head, and moved slowly away from me. I stopped instantly, and walked round so as to appear by no means anxious to catch him. After two or three times walking round him, each time getting nearer, I at length ventured on approaching him.

'Now, I had often noticed that if you went up to a horse very slowly, and continued saying: "Ah, now, good horse," and all that, the animal usually appeared to suspect you meant some mischief, and would move off; so, trusting that the schimmel was a good shooting horse, I loaded my gun nearly close to him, and then walked straight towards him, as though we were old friends, taking care to advance from the left side. To my joy and delight, he raised his head from feeding, but stood perfectly quiet. I seized the bridle, jumped on his back, and, with a hearty "trek," galloped off.

'Whilst I was loading my gun, I could hear the

conversation of some Zooloos in the distance: these men were shouting to one another from the hill-tops, and I knew that this would entail hard riding and a watchful eye, to enable me to escape from the parties which were already out endeavouring to secure possession of all the crossings of the rivers; whilst the less fleet of foot would watch me from the hill-tops; but now, on the back of a horse, I felt safe. The schimmel galloped strong, and felt like iron under me, and I had soon passed over three or four miles; but now I had a bad piece of bush to pass through, and I suspected that the enemy were there in wait for me.

'When within about a quarter of a mile of the bush, which I saw was only about a hundred yards in extent, I pulled up, as though to look about me, but, in reality, to note if any path other than that by which I was approaching led through the bushes. I saw another some distance to the left; so I rode down towards this, as though I purposed passing through over this path. My plan succeeded, for I instantly saw several black heads moving along very quickly, from near the path where I appeared to be going, to that by which my passage was now expected.

'I rode on very slowly, and as though I had seen nothing; but when I approached within about fifty yards of the dense bush, I turned my horse, and rode full gallop towards the other pathway, and dashed through the bushes, fortunately without interruption. A savage yell, from at least fifty disappointed Zooloos, greeted me, when I appeared on the other side; for I had drawn their ambuscade from the one pathway to the other, and thus escaped. I rode hard for the next two hours, but did not see another friend or foe, until I came up with the party of Mensch, who were hastening down to the bay to save what they could, either by trekking or going on board a ship; for we knew that the Zooloos would be down upon us in a couple of days at farthest.

'I have been in many a sharp and hard fight since that day, and some not the most pleasant to look back upon; but, as I told you at the commencement, the first battle, like the first of everything, is that which we remember the best, and so I can recall every circumstance attending my first fight, and am thus able to tell all that happened, without forgetting one incident, or even the feelings which I then experienced.'

NAIADS OF THE SEINE.

I NEVER could understand how it happens that among French ladies, who have, as a rule, a dread and horror of those ablutions, partial or entire, to which every English woman is accustomed, should be found expert and habitual swimmers; but so it is.

French people do not know the value of either plain wholesome food, out-of-door exercise, a free circulation of air, or the free use of cold water, as preservatives of health. Paris, moreover, is ill supplied with the last-mentioned element: a few conduits are seen here and there, but there is no general provision for furnishing water to houses, much less to apartments; hence it is a luxury, being purchased from the water-carriers, who perambulate the streets with casks full of 'Eau de Seine,' which they retail at two sous (or one penny) a pail; not too much, when we consider that they are often called upon to mount five or six flights of stairs with a heavy pail depending from either end of the yoke on their shoulders, to fill the kitchen fountain, the only receptacle for water provided in the majority of Parisian houses.

I know many ladies who would on no account 'wash their faces,' as we understand the term. The end of a towel dipped in water, stretched over the tips of the fingers, and thus passed over the face,

suffices for some; others think that a bit of cotton dipped in a quarter of a tea-saucerful of equal parts of spirits of wine and water, or of brandy and water, is a very good contrivance for cleansing and improving the skin; others, again, consider a morsel of flannel indued with 'cold cream,' and smeared over the face, as a sure method of arriving at the desired result. Warm water is patronised by a few.* But when we English tell the women of Paris that the freshness and bloom of our English complexion is preserved by the healthful and copious application of cold water, they laugh outright, saying they see we will not tell our little secret.

In striking contrast to the ladies who follow these and similar devices, are those who disport in the river like amphibious creatures.

Ouarnier's *Ecole de Natation pour Dames* (Swimming-school for Ladies) opens in the month of May, and it is difficult to imagine a more novel or prettier scene than it presents on a warm afternoon, for even the swimmers eschew the water at an early hour of the day; it must have been well warmed by the sun to please them.

Neither at concert, race, nor ball in Paris have I beheld so many beautiful faces as at this school; one reason perhaps being, that many girls, from ten to fifteen, are visitors to the bath, who are excluded, by their age, from sharing in public amusements.

The young ladies of the 'Noble Faubourg,'† the daughters of the wealthy 'financiers,' the families attached to the emperor, all meet here with the same intention—namely, to swim; and all who are able, gambol, race, and laugh in the water, forgetful of party and social distinctions. The costume is generally of some dark material, gaily trimmed with red or blue worsted binding, which does not lose its colour. The upper part of the dress resembles a boy's blouse; the lower, a pair of trousers. It is all in one, and a tunic is sewn to the waist, and falls to the knee. Some of the girls go in without any kind of head-dress beyond their own fine hair, neatly plaited; others wear nets of gay colours, or a slight-netted scarlet or blue scarf gracefully arranged. The greater part of the swimmers are, as we have intimated, young; but ladies of all ages and sizes swim in the bath, which it is time we described.

It presents to the eye a basin about 150 or 160 feet long, and about 25 or 30 feet broad, surrounded by a broad platform, enclosed by the dressing-rooms, and screened alike from the sun and from public observation by an awning stretched over all. The bottom of the boat is an inclined plane, not more than 2 feet below the surface of the water at one end, but 12 or 13 feet below its level at the other. The bed of the river is artificially deepened, so as to allow the bath to rise and fall according to the quantity of water. The machine is so arranged that the powerful current of the Seine rushes through it; it is, in fact, a large cage sunk to the required depth.

* Infants and children do not fare much better in this respect than their parents. I have often been present at the washing and dressing of a fine baby, say of three or four months old: a small vessel containing a very limited quantity of warm water, and a bit of sponge, is all that is employed in place of the ample bath, common among us. In vain you expatiate on the benefits of the English system, and suggest that the child should be immersed daily; beginning with warm water, and gradually lowering the temperature, so as to reach cold in the course of a week. O no! mamma says she does not wish to bring her child up 'à l'Anglaise.'

Mammas and children profit at rare intervals by the numerous and cheap warm-baths; in these they have no objection to remain for an hour at a time, either at the public establishments or at their own houses, where the expense of the bath itself, the hot water to fill it, and the labour of the men who bring it and take it away, is covered by the small sum of from thirty to thirty-five sous—fifteen to eighteen pence in the rich neighbourhoods, and about half that price in a poor one.

† The Faubourg St. Germain.

That part of the basin which is from four to five feet deep is crossed by a bridge; and the smaller portion thus indicated is used by those who wish to bathe only, or who are not sufficiently good swimmers to exercise, as yet, in the larger one. A flight of steps leads down to the shallow end of the basin, for the convenience of those who like to walk in; other flights go down on each side of the bridge, for the use of those who know just enough of swimming to give the few strokes necessary to take them a little way down the smaller basin, or across it.

But the large basin is the centre of attraction. At the end where the water is deepest, flights of steps lead down for those who like to swim smoothly and quietly off; but far the greater number prefer leaping in, either from the platform, or from the little fanciful construction, half arch, half temple, raised at the end of it, and which gives a descent any height you please—between ten and twenty feet—to the surface of the water.

Fearless, gay, and graceful, they plunge beneath the flood to reappear almost instantly, gliding down the stream without any apparent effort; floating, swimming on the back, &c., vary the amusements, which more than a hundred ladies may sometimes be seen sharing together, their evolutions being watched and stimulated by as many lookers-on—their mothers and female friends, who are seated around. But, alas! swimming is like every other acquirement—before the art is mastered, some disagreeable training must be gone through; many a gasp must be given, many a splashing and floundering enacted by the neophyte, in the small basin, before she is qualified to attempt a performance in the large one.

Little did I think, when I inscribed myself on M. Ouarnier's list, that I should be hung on a hook at the end of a line, and then thrown into the water with directions to imitate a frog to the best of my ability; but it was even so.

I had never seen swimmers except at a respectful distance, and fancied their heads were kept above water by some fin-like movement of the limbs, which movement the swimming-master would jump into the water and teach me in a minute, just keeping me by his side, and supporting me a little at first.

The plan followed I found to be this: the stranger being duly invested with the *costume de bain* (swimming-dress), is informed that there are three movements, afterwards condensed into two, that when the arms are stretched forward and outward, the legs must be closed and drawn up, and *vice versa*. The movements of the *maitre nageur* (swimming-master) cannot fully realise this on dry land; so he puts a broad girdle round your waist, and by means of a hook and line, drops you gently on to the surface of the water, in order that you may carry the theory into practice.

O dear, how helpless you feel!—how you wish you had never thought of learning to swim! But you are ashamed to say so; you know you cannot be drowned; the man adjusts his line so nicely to the level of the water, you feel quite sure of that; so he counts 'One, two, three,' and you perform Froggy awkwardly enough, putting out your hands when you ought to keep them in, stretching your arms forward when they ought to be close to your body, kicking in anything but measured cadence, bobbing under water, and getting a good mouthful, notwithstanding you, silly creature, stiffen your neck, and try to keep your head up by that means. Thus ends the first lesson. When you come out of the water, they tell you, if you should feel a little stiff next day, not to mind it, and that the only way to get rid of the inconvenience is to take a lesson the next day, and the next. A little stiff? Your neck and shoulders ache again—nothing for it but to recommence the exercise of yesterday. You feel less tired

this time, when you come out of the water, and have comported yourself less clumsily when in it. In fact, after three or four lessons, you are handed down the steps on that side of the bridge where the water is four feet six inches deep; the swimming-master holds a long rope in the water at the distance of three or four feet from you, and requests you to make the movements you have been taught. If they do not enable you to clear the distance between you and the pole, he hastens to advance it to you. You return to the steps, try again; and as soon as you can manage a short distance, the pole is held further from you; till, after two or three lessons more, you swim off from the steps at the end, where the water is deepest, the man on the platform preceding you with a pole as you attempt to make your way down the large basin. When you can go no further, you grasp the pole, and are gently drawn through the water back to the steps, to renew your efforts.

When the pupil can accomplish the whole length of the great basin under the eye of the master, she is left to perfect herself in the smaller one, where there is no danger. And when she feels she can rely on her powers, she returns to the great bath, where her first essays are made easy by the assistance of a ledge for the feet which surrounds the bath at a depth of about three feet below the surface, and which being surmounted by a rail a little above the water's edge, permits the swimmers to take rest at any point. This large basin is constantly watched either by Quarrier himself or by the swimming-master; these are the only individuals of the male sex ever present. Madame Quarrier is, as may be expected, a perfect swimmer, and takes an active interest in all the proceedings.

THE PORTRAIT OF A CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.*

It is quite in vain that critics and readers both constantly repeat that the biography of a man of letters is almost always uneventful and unentertaining, and that we can hardly expect it to be otherwise. Whatever we expect, or have any just cause for expecting, there is, and always will be, an incurable curiosity to know something of *the man*, wherever the *writer* has succeeded in interesting us.

Other great men, the great captain, the great statesman, write their lives in their deeds; the very career which ennobles and distinguishes them, is also their biography. We see them in their actions. Their lives, too, are written in the history of their country; they hardly need a separate memorial. With the man of letters, it is otherwise. He has written a book, and put it there on the desk before us. The hand that placed it is unseen. He has revealed himself to us by his thoughts only; unless some friend will tell us, we can know nothing of his destiny. We have in him an object of esteem, perhaps of some degree of veneration, and yet our hero remains, even to the mind's eye, obstinately invisible. We desire that he should take human form, and be seen like the rest of us, moving amongst the realities of everyday-life. Under what circumstances had he those thoughts which have so interested us? He was not thinker only; he, too, suffered and enjoyed before he passed away. 'How lived, how loved, how died he?' It may be a common-place story, but in this instance we must have the common-place.

Mr Burgon is the very friend we would, if we

might, have chosen to tell us about the inner and outer life of such a man as Patrick Fraser Tytler. There is throughout the work a tone of delicate and discriminating appreciation of moral graces as well as virtues; there is also a something of old-world simplicity and loyalty pervading the volume, from its dedication to its close, of chivalry formal, indeed, but lofty and tender, which is in excellent keeping with the character portrayed. Mr Burgon has also been fortunate in receiving most able co-operation. The details given of Mr Tytler's youth, as well as some relating to his London life, are put together by his sister's graceful and practised pen—the pen to which our children owe so many pleasant hours.

Patrick Fraser Tytler had a hereditary claim, it would appear, upon talent and goodness: his grandfather and father were both eminent for these. The former was William Tytler, the well-known defender of Mary Stuart. His *Inquiry into the Evidence against the Queen of Scots* was declared at the time to have formed an era in literary history; was reviewed by Dr Johnson, lauded by Lord Hardwicke, and chafed at by David Hume, who appears to have departed on this occasion from his usual mildness towards literary opponents. But in this case, what the man *was* has more permanent interest than what the writer *did*. In his healthy nature, fervent affections and love of harmless frolic lasted unimpaired till the age of fourscore. At seventy-five, we find him writing of the wife he had lost two years before, as fondly as he might have done fifty years back: 'She is the first idea that strikes my waking thought in the morning, and the last that forsakes it in sleep.' Truly, a glorious old grandfather for any man to have had. Patrick Tytler's father, too, Lord Woodhouselee, was equally distinguished for talents, culture, and domestic perfection—the word is not too strong. Nothing can be more attractive than the picture given of the scientific lawyer, the learned Professor of Universal History, the popular author at his own home, and surrounded by his family. 'My dear father,' writes his daughter Ann, 'when did he ever find out a fault in any of his children? We were all perfect with him, yet we were a wild unruly set; we scrambled into a sort of uncertain education. I scarce know how. My dear mother in vain endeavoured to check my father's unlimited indulgence. "I do it on principle," he would say; "I know they are the kind of children with whom it will answer best."' And it did answer marvellously well, as it always will when 'done on principle,' not from indolence or mere impulse; when, consequently, it is steady and constant, to be leaned on confidently, not fitful and uncertain, to be taken advantage of while it lasts. Miss Ann Tytler gives us many a charming peep into social life at Woodhouselee. Walter Scott, most lovable of all the sons of genius, came often there for many days at a time. 'It was a beautiful feature in his character that he required no audience of the learned or the great to draw out the charm of his conversation; he seemed in his element equally with old and young.' What walks they had with him in the mornings! up towards the green hill of Castlelaw, with Carmethy rising behind. There 'he would begin his delightful stories. Sometimes they were legends of the old Covenanters; for at no great distance from where we were seated, had been discovered several Covenanters' graves; and a report was current in our village that on one day a funeral-procession by torch-light had been seen slowly wending their way amongst the hills towards this ancient burial-place—no one knowing whence they came.'

Could anything be better than such mornings as these? Yes; still more delectable the thrill of 'the ghost-stories of the autumn evenings, when we used to entreat my father not to ring for candles after

* *Memoirs of Patrick Fraser Tytler, author of the History of Scotland.* By his friend, the Rev. John W. Burgon, M.A., Fellow of Oriel College. Published by John Murray.

dinner; but drawing round the clear wood-fire, we listened with such excited feelings of terror and of awe, that very soon, for any of us to have moved to ring a bell would have been impossible. How could we dare to doubt the truth of every word, having ourselves our own legitimate ghost to be believed in, celebrated by Walter Scott himself in one of his ballads, "To Auchindinny's hazel shade and haunted Woodhouselee?" How indeed? There was the 'big bedroom' with tapestry hangings, and 'a mysterious-looking, small, and very old door,' from which, as might be expected, 'the ghost was wont to issue.' An old nurse, who, with a young daughter, Betty, 'took charge of the house during the winter,' had faced the haunting vision—Lady Anne Bothwell—so often, that familiarity had bred contempt. "'Deed," she would say to her young auditors, "I hae seen her times out o' number, but I am in no ways feared. I ken weel she canna gang beyond her commission. But there's that silly, feckless thing, Betty; she met her in the lang passage ae night in the winter-time, and she had nae a drap o' bluid in her face for a fortnight after. She says Lady Anne came sae near her, she could see her dress quite weel. It was a Manchester muslin with a wee flower."

In the early days of his married life, Walter Scott was not only, as we have seen, a frequent visitor, but a near neighbour; his pretty cottage at Lasswade, with 'but one good sitting-room,' yet 'every appearance of taste and cultivation,' being within a walk of Woodhouselee. Thither, too, came Dugald Stewart, 'no deep philosopher to the younger branches of the family;' Henry Mackenzie, not so thoroughly the 'man of feeling' as, indeed, to shrink from the excitement of, or fail to find 'intense enjoyment' in, a cock-fight, but kind-hearted, and always a friend at need; Sir James Mackintosh, who was related to Mrs Tytler; Leyden, the insatiate student and marvellous orientalist; Lord Jeffrey, with his brilliant conversation; and best and brightest of all possible guests, Sydney Smith, with his 'straightforward, generous, benevolent character and sparkling wit.' It is pleasant to read how that, on a stormy evening at Woodhouselee, when rattling windows interrupted the conversation, Sydney Smith, ready-handed as he was ready-minded, asked for knife, screw, and a bit of wood, that he might 'cure it in a moment;' how that the little bit of wood was christened Sydney's button; and how that, after a lapse of fifty years, with their vicissitudes of paper and paint, 'amidst all the changes of masters, time, and taste,' Sydney's button has ever been respectfully preserved. It was amid this charmed circle of the good and gifted, that Patrick Fraser's childhood and youth were passed. He was born in Princes Street, Edinburgh, in 1791, and educated first at a lady's reading-school close at hand, and then at the High School, where he was more beloved by his school-fellows than distinguished in his class. Those were exciting days for school-boys. There was a long-standing feud between the High School and the University, which now and then reached a height at which a *bicker* became necessary. The parties were 'drawn out in battle-array, facing each other, each with a mountain of small stones by their side, which they hurled without mercy at the heads of their enemies, till one or other gave in.' Into these strifes, Patrick Tytler, gentle as he was, would throw himself, heart and soul; his sister remembers his 'darting into the room one day with his face all bruised and streaming with blood, exclaiming: "Wash my face; quick, quick—put a cold key down my back, and let me out again to the bicker." Lord Woodhouselee was too sensible to be uneasy about a boy like this—gentle and brave, that happiest of all combinations—merely because he did not head his class. He declared that Patrick was 'a

wonderful boy'—pointed, in confirmation of his paternal estimate, to the expression of countenance with which he listened to conversation far beyond his years, and prophesied that, despite his preference for 'amusing stories' above 'improving books,' he would 'read grave enough books by and by.'

But, indeed, Patrick's 'amusing stories' appear to have been 'improving' too; and it is pleasant to think of the boy stretched on the library carpet with Percy's *Reliques*, the *Faery Queen*, the *Arabian Nights*, Shakspeare, which he knew by heart, and chief favourite of the embryo historian, De Salis's *History of the Moors*, 'a very old-looking book, a thin quarto, in very large print, which he had poked out from some odd corner in the book-case.' We do not wonder that when, in 1808, young Tytler was sent from the freedom of his happy home to a school near London, he 'should have had a hard battle to fight with his home feelings.' However, this was, according to his own account, the turning-point of his life; he became a most assiduous student. 'What should I not do to please such a father?' he writes. Greek he soon feared he should be only too fond of, and every leisure hour was devoted to English reading, especially to history. 'In September 1809,' writes his sister Ann, 'he returned to us again—a joyful day for all; yet soon after his arrival, we missed his youngest sister from the room, and found her weeping. "What! in tears," we said, "and our Patrick returned to us again; and is he not delightful?" "O yes, yes," she answered; "he is delightful, but he speaks English." There were other changes too—a 'touch of seriousness,' signs of an over-anxious temper—of a scrupulousness which he himself called 'worrying;' in short, 'the only fear now was that he should study too hard.' For the next three years he lived at home, attending classes at the college, diligently preparing for them, and enjoying the closest and happiest companionship with his beloved father.

Lord Woodhouselee had been an invalid for some years; but his mind was bright as ever, and his sufferings were borne with so calm, nay, cheerful a resignation, that when, in 1813, the end suddenly came, the loss to his family was inexpressibly and abidingly felt. Not to quote the fervent language of his early sorrow, six years after we find Tytler writing of his own bereavement thus: 'My heart must cease to beat, my memory become a blank, my affections wither, and my whole being change, before the love and goodness of my father, and the uninterrupted happiness of our life when he dwelt surrounded by his family in this earthly paradise, shall fade from my recollection.' But to return to 1813. Patrick Tytler's studies had for some time past taken a legal direction, and in this year he was admitted into the Faculty of Advocates. The following spring, accompanied by three intimate friends, he went off to Paris, and beheld that constellation of remarkable men that shone out there for a brief season during Napoleon's exile to Elba. His life was bright and exciting. 'Only think of seeing the Apollo Belvedere one morning, and the Emperor Alexander the next;' but in the midst of it all, he could find time for long letters to those at home, and his commonplace-book shews that none of the temptations and distractions with which he was surrounded, ever lowered his lofty standard of theory or practice. After only three years' standing at the bar, Mr Tytler was made junior crown-counsel—an honourable appointment, which he delighted to ascribe solely to the respect paid to his father's memory. The next ten years of his life passed peaceably and pleasantly. Law and literature divided his studious hours. He attended the northern circuit with a fair promise of professional popularity; but his biographer admits that in his inmost heart Mr Tytler loved the law only as

a branch of literature—believes that, as a profession, he never really loved it at all. However, for several years he did his best to like it.

Pleasantly alternating with the business of his life, we find summer visits and wanderings, an expedition to Norway, much social enjoyment at the Bannatyne Club or with the Mid-Lothian yeomanry—of which club and corps Tytler's exuberant spirits, ready faculty of song-writing, and beautiful voice in song-singing, made him a conspicuous and popular member. He tried his pen, too, in the early pages of *Blackwood*, and what with study and society, he must have lived only too fast, for, at a very early age, we find him recording that his friends often told him that his brow was already wrinkled and marked with furrows, and that for so young a man it 'was a shame that this should be so.'

It was about the year 1823 that he began, according to Mr Burgon, to exemplify what was with him, in after-years, a favourite literary precept—namely, that an author, instead of frittering away his energies on a multitude of subjects of minor interest, should, as soon as practicable, take up some large inquiry, and then make it the business of his literary life to prosecute that inquiry with exclusive attention; making his other studies subsidiary to his own great master-study, and reading every book with a constant reference to this one ruling object of his ambition. Tytler had a hereditary love of history; his legal studies had familiarised him with that of his own country; he began to feel that 'law, too jealous to brook the presence of a rival,' and evidently a rival preferred, was fast forsaking him, and that he was capable of fuller development and worthier success in another department of enterprise. So much for predisposing causes; but it was 'an evening at Abbotsford' which decided his fate. It was Sir Walter Scott who suggested to him the scheme of writing a History of Scotland, remarking that he knew his tastes and favourite pursuits lay so strongly in the line of history that the labour could not fail to be congenial to him . . . and that, having the advantage of youth on his side, he might live to complete a work which would confer a lasting benefit on his country.

At first, Tytler seems to have been a little daunted by the formidable character of the undertaking; but its labours all lay in a congenial direction, and he was not a man to shrink from labour. In the summer of 1826 he appears to have entered upon his work in good earnest. But this year had for him a still more sacred interest. He married in its spring a beautiful and accomplished woman, to whom he had been deeply attached for two years, and they settled in Edinburgh. Perhaps, if there be any point of fair criticism as to the manner in which Mr Burgon has executed his task, any 'dilemma' between the fear of withholding or revealing too much, out of which his 'instinct' has not extricated him to the satisfaction of all, it is with regard to the extracts he gives us from Mr Tytler's correspondence with his wife. Letters such as these should have been sacred to the one to and for whom alone they were written. They display no talent, they do not even individualise; they are just what any warm heart and graceful mind might have written to its dearest and nearest. We should have believed just as profoundly in Mr Tytler's conjugal devotion had they not been inserted. Letters they are to be read and re-read through happy tears, to lie upon a loving heart, to be conned over and over again, with a deepening sense of their meaning and their charm, by the one—not letters to appear in print thirty years later—not fitted to meet or to reward the perusal of the general reader. With that bliss no stranger should intermeddle. In 1828, the first baby was born, and Tytler's lot had fallen indeed upon pleasant ground; yet we already presage the quarter in

which the cloud will gather. The health of the beloved Rachel, delicate from the first, grew more and more so; symptoms of consumption came on. But such love as Tytler's must of necessity cast out fear—the insupportable fear of losing. He hoped on, and therefore had energy to work indefatigably at his *History*, the first two volumes of which appeared respectively in 1828 and 1829, and were very impartially reviewed by Sir Walter Scott in the *Quarterly Review*. In the spring of 1830, Tytler found it necessary to visit London, for the purpose of consulting some of the invaluable manuscripts contained in that rich treasure-house the State Paper Office, and in the British Museum. His visit appears to have been successful as to its main object, to have introduced him to many a delightful circle; but nothing could make up for the separation from his Rachel, and as he pleasantly expressed it, he 'soon began to feel like the old gentleman who, when he lost at cards, used to say: "Baaby, I'm no diverted."' The month of June, however, restored him to his happy home. The following winter, owing to the change of ministry, Tytler lost his appointment; but he was beginning to gain by his works. The *History* went on prosperously, and two volumes of the *Scottish Worthies* were ready for publication. But the cloud—the one cloud—gathered more dark than ever. Mrs Tytler's health could no longer endure an Edinburgh winter. Torquay was the shelter fixed upon; and it supplied to every member of the little party what they most wanted: to Mrs Tytler's delicate constitution, a mild air; to her husband, literary leisure. The summer was spent in London, in daily visits to the State-Office; the next winter, in Bute.

Early in 1835 Mr Tytler appears to have felt increased anxiety respecting his wife's health; but he little knew how hopeless its state was. He thought that it would be very delightful if they could all settle for some years at Rome. Alas! his Rachel was taken from him that very spring. Her death seems to have been holy and beautiful like her life; and, sustained by the memory and the influence of her 'lofty piety,' in the extremity of her husband's anguish, 'the language of pious resignation ever swallowed up the language of heart-broken grief.'

His three children were now his constant companions; and they seem to have felt for him as he did for his excellent father. 'There is but one word,' writes his daughter, 'that can express the whole method and extent of his teaching, so powerful, so winning, so lovely to us his children; that word is love.' After his severe affliction, we find that Tytler returned to live with his family, and that they settled in London. He went on uninterruptedly at the State-Office and daily revelled in 'new facts.' Could he, he writes, but have had permission to work from ten till four, instead of from eleven to three!

In 1836, Dr Gillies, historiographer for Scotland, died, and Tytler had anxiously hoped to succeed him. Political interest, however, turned the scale against him; and he bore his disappointment with his usual unflinching sweetness of temper. It was about this time that Mr Burgon first became acquainted with him; and congenial pursuits, tastes, and manners soon led to their intimacy. About this time, too, we read with interest that Tytler was examined on the Record Commission before a committee of the House of Commons, and that the measures he recommended for rendering the immense mass of information there buried in state-papers available to the country, are now—after an interval of twenty years—being strictly acted upon. Hence Mr Burgon expects a new era in the historical literature of this country; and to illustrate the reasonableness of his expectation, he gives the following fact. Tytler's suggestion was, that the first efforts should be exclusively devoted to

the formation of catalogues of historical materials existing in England—catalogues containing a brief analysis of the documents they embraced; whereas the plan adopted was that of printing the documents themselves; or, rather, this was attempted, for the task proved impossible. In 1830, the publication of the correspondence of the reign of Henry VIII. began, was brought down to 1852, by which time eleven quarto volumes had appeared. There are *seven hundred folio volumes* of manuscripts belonging to that same reign. Who has a clue put into his hand to find the way through these manuscript catacombs, may well bless Mr Tytler's memory. We, with our lack of Dryasdust tendencies, turn away from them with a certain sense of relief, to the pleasant glimpses Miss Tytler affords us of family-life. Charming people have always charming servants. The Tytlers transported to London, spite of Sydney Smith's humorous denunciations, their Scotch furniture and an old Scotch woman—Allen. They could not get on without Allen. No wonder. 'The other day,' said Miss Tytler to Sydney Smith, 'we desired her to buy a large earthen pan to keep the bread in—she returned in high indignation.

"Would you believe it, leddies! I asked in ane o' the shops if they had a big brown pig for keeping our bread, and no ane o' them could make out what I meant. O but they are a far-back nation! And when I priced a haddock this morning in the fish-shop, they telt me eighteenpence. I thought I would hae fainted."

Allen was evidently a thorough patriot, and had her misgivings about English things in general. The house in Devonshire Place might look 'all very weel;' she is not to be taken in. She can see 'that, in point o' substantiality, it's naething like what we hae left.' She discerns 'a hantle o' things that will soon need to be repaired.' And having been told that the houses in London are only built to last so many years, 'only hopes we hae nae connected ourselves wi' a frail tenement.'

Frail or not, it was a happy home. Mr Tytler's enchanting playfulness made his every return to it from the State Paper Office or elsewhere a very rapture to his children. Spite of his engrossing pursuits, of the irreparable loss his heart had known, there was ever about him a 'spirit of delight,' a healthy pleasure in little things—the buoyant child surviving in the man, which is one of Heaven's choicest gifts, and goes indeed further, perhaps, than any other towards brightening everyday-life and insuring affection.

But we must not omit to notice what Mr Burgon impressively conveys, that Tytler's *true* life was spent neither in the State Paper Office nor among his relatives and friends. It was a hidden thing. So religious, so cheerful, so useful, so happy a career would leave us nothing to regret, did we not find that excessive application impaired bodily health, and led to a slight paralytic seizure two years before the close of his great work in 1843. In 1844, a letter from Sir Robert Peel announced that a pension of £200 per annum had been granted to the laborious historian, who forwards the welcome intelligence in his own playful way to Mr Burgon; and we would willingly have quoted this letter, as well as many of those to his children, had our limits allowed it. In 1845, Tytler went into second nuptials with a lady he had long known, 'of great personal attractions, fine abilities, and many accomplishments.' He was at this time contemplating a History of the Reformation; and thus, with unimpaired devotion to study, and a renewal of domestic happiness, his life seemed about to brighten into a second summer. But the incessant labours of years past had not been pursued with impunity. When will good men learn that, with

regard to our physical health, it is decreed that as a man soweth, so also he shall reap? When will their conscience plead for the more strict observance of the great laws that apply to the care of these temples of the soul, and denounce their violation as disobedience to the will of God concerning us? Tytler's physical and mental energies broke down suddenly and completely. The remaining years were years of wandering from place to place in the vain search for health; of inaction and despondency, over which it were painful to dwell. He died in 1849.

Our short sketch can convey little notion of the charm of the character the biographer has so well portrayed; nor can a pen-and-ink outline give much idea of a Vandyck. But no one can, we think, have had even thus much insight into the nature of the book, without heartily agreeing with Mr Burgon that the life of a good man may be more instructive, and better deserving of attention, than many a more stirring biographical record.

BENONI.

SWEET earth, that holds my brightest prize,
Be wept upon by gentle skies!

Blest grave, that keeps the lovely thing,
'From his sweet dust let violets spring.'

Dear winds, that sweep the tiny bed,
Breathe lulling music o'er his head.

Hush thy wild voice of fear, great storm!
Fright not the little sleeping form.

Beat not the turf to cause him pain;
Weep quiet tears, soft summer rain!

Weave thou a fairy shroud, dear snow,
For the bright flower that sleeps below!

Drop richly here, sweet sunset light,
And dress my boy in raiment bright.

Green leaves make whisper o'er his rest,
And soothe his dreams on earth's cold breast.

O gentle water, running near,
Murmur sweet comfort to his ear.

Build here thy nest, O ringdove mild,
Talk softly to my lonely child;

Dear dove, make, too, a plaintive moan,
For the sad mother left alone.

O white-winged angels, softly bear
My darling up heaven's golden stair!

Dear God, who lov'st the little child,
Take to thyself my undefiled!

Sweet Christ, who hear'st the widow's cry,
Make haste to hear me, lest I die!

J. B.